# SARA SKYWAVES

W5SRA

**JANUARY 2024**

## *President's Message*

Hello January and welcome to 2024!

I hope this letter finds everyone well and that you had a very Merry Christmas.

I would like to start this letter with an apology. I was to be net control December 25th and it completely slipped my mind.

I was net control on December 4th and the question for the evening was: "What would you like to see more of at SARA going forward?" The following were the answers in no particular order.

1) More Parks on the Air or just setting up outside and playing radio.

2) Possibly installing a local GMRS repeater to generate more interest in that group to become amateur radio operators.

3) A technology subject to be presented on the SARA Information Net for discussion.

All are good ideas and the Board discussed these subjects on December 28, 2023 (see the board minutes at the end of this newsletter).

At our November Board Meeting we discussed some changes to the By-Laws. If you would like to be a part of the changes that SARA is making, please be at the club meetings January 11th and February 8th. I will be presenting the proposed changes in January. We will publish the proposed changes in the February SARA Skywaves and will hold a vote in February regarding those possible changes.

Keep in mind Tom Kihm, KJ6PST, is presenting in January at our meeting. His topic - Is Transmission Line Impedance Real and Where Did the Power Go?

73,

Andy, W5KZJ

## JOIN US ON THE AIR

ALL SARA operations and all Sachse ARES/RACES operations are being conducted on the W5SRA repeater

The Sachse Amateur Radio Association uses the W5SRA repeater in Sachse, TX:
Frequency: 440.350 MHz
Shift: +5MHz
PL tone: 110.9 (Tx & Rx)

**SARA Weekly Information Net**
**Monday, 7:00 PM on the W5SRA Repeater**

The W5SRA repeater is accessible via EchoLink and AllStarLink.
Sachse Radio Club **AllStarLink Instructions**: (Click Here)
Please use node 528831 to connect using AllStarLink

## Next General Meeting

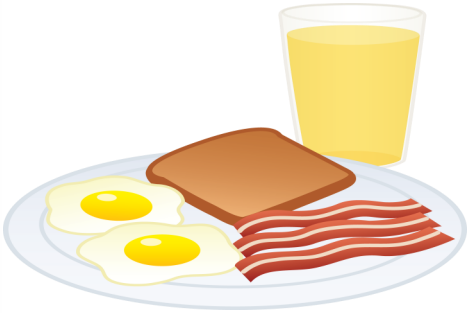
**Thursday, January 11 @ 7:30 PM**

North Pointe Church of Christ

7030 S State Hwy 78,

Sachse, TX 75048

**Topic: Transmission Line Impedance**



***QSO* Breakfast**

Meet us each Saturday at 7:30am at **Ballard Street Cafe**, 112 N. Ballard in downtown **Wylie**. People begin showing up around 7:00 with most showing up by 7:30am.

## Next Board Meeting:

January 25, 2024 via *Google Meet* at this link.

**ANYONE IS WELCOME TO JOIN US!!**

## ARRL Announcement

2024 ARRL National Convention to be at Hamvention

ARRL The National Association for Amateur Radio® and Hamvention® have announced that Hamvention will host the 2024 ARRL National Convention, May 17, 18, and 19 at the Greene County Fairgrounds in Xenia, Ohio. Hamvention is the world's largest annual gathering of radio amateurs and has been sponsored by the Dayton Amateur Radio Association (DARA) since 1952.

"We are pleased to unveil our 2024 logo and theme," announced 2024 Hamvention General Chair Jim Storms, AB8YK, and the Hamvention team. "The theme is 'Expanding our Community'. This is in support of the growth of amateur radio worldwide."

Hamvention Awards Chair Michael Kalter, W8CI, also shared a reminder that the nomination period is open to submit nominations for 2024 Hamvention Awards, including the Amateur of the Year, Technical Achievement, Special Achievement, and Club of the Year awards. More information about the awards can found on the Hamvention website, and nominations will close on February 15, 2024.

ARRL is building a program for its National Convention that will include presentations and forums, more than a dozen exhibits, and activities for young hams. Once finalized, the National Convention program will be published at www.arrl.org/expo.

Hamvention urged "everyone to purchase their tickets and make their room reservations early to avoid the rush." Visit the Hamvention website for more information and to order tickets at www.hamvention.org.

## Find us on Facebook!

Did you know you can keep up with events and conversations between newsletters by joining the Sachse Amateur Radio Association on Facebook? Click the Facebook link above.

## SARA Weekly Information Net

**This net is now held every Monday @ 7:00 PM**

**W5SRA Repeater: 440.350MHz, +5.0MHz, Tone 110.9**

**Sunday Public Service Net**
**W5SRA Repeater 440.350, Tone 110.9 @8:00 PM**

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Every Monday - "SARA Weekly Information Net"** 7:00pm W5SRA Repeater

440.350 MHz,
Offset +5.00 Mhz,
PL tone: 110.9

**January 6th - "Kid's Day"** is designed to give on-the-air experience to youngsters and hopefully foster interest in getting a license of their own. This month's event is on ***Saturday, January 6th, from 1800-2359 UTC.*** For more information on this, please visit: http://www.arrl.org/kids-day

**January 11th - "SARA (Sachse) Club Meeting"** 7:30pm North Pointe Church, 7030 Highway 78 in Sachse.

**January 14th - "Sachse RACES Public Service Net"** 8:00pm W5SRA Repeater

**January 19th - "The Cowtown Hamfest"** 3:00pm to 7:00pm and January 20th - 7:00pm to 3:00pm. This will be held at the Forest Hill Civic and Convention Center, 6901 Wichita Street in Forest Hill. Talk-In frequency is 146.940 (-) PL 110.9. For more information, visit: http://www.cowtownhamfest.com/

**January 20th - "Severe WX Education Training (SKYWARN)** 8:30am 6301 Chapel Hill Blvd, Plano, TX 75093

**January 20th - "W5SRA Laurel VE Test Session"** Time is 9:00am at the North Point Church located at 7030 Highway 78 in Sachse.

**January 25th - "SARA (Sachse) Club Board of Directors"** 7:00pm via Google Meets. Link is here

**January 28th - "Sachse RACES Public Service Net"** 8:00pm W5SRA Repeater

## Other Events

**Garland Amateur Radio Club - FCC license preparation classes:**

Contact: John M. Abbott, KF5FWK education@k5qhd.org Garland Amateur Radio Club, Education Director about any upcoming licensing training classes that are in the works.

# To CQ, or Not to CQ

In the QRP world, sending CQ is usually not very productive.

I send CQ when I'm operating QRP portable solely because I want to look up the "spots" on the Reverse Beacon Network later on. I want to know how well my antenna was "getting out", and how good/bad the propagation was.

***Then there was this radio...***

So, a friend of mine bought a $1400 QRP radio. It has this beautiful color screen, and a spectrum display. And I thought, "That's a lot of money..." And it is a lot of money. But in the QRP world, the best strategy is to chase a known good propagation link back to its source. Sending CQ is a waste of time.

I was able to try the radio out. Sure was nice to be able to see all of the strong signals on the spectrum display. It was like fishing with a fish finder. It's almost cheating.

Then I discovered that there is another QRP radio with a small black and white spectrum display... for sale for $250. So, there is hope for me.

When it gets down to $50, maybe I'll buy one.

***Antennas, antennas, antennas***

You can spend $1400 on a portable radio and still get bad results. After all, there is still the antenna - the weak link in most amateur radio installations. In the QRP portable game, many of the antennas are not very good.

In fact, I like to call Field Day "The Land of Bad Antennas".

It's a good thing that Field Day is not just a radio exercise. It's also the big social event of the year for most radio clubs. Me, I like the hot dogs and the chips.

When I first became a ham in 2017, Field Day was the best place to learn about the hobby. There I could see different radio setups, and different modes... all in one place, and on one weekend.

My first Field Day, there wasn't a single CW operator in attendance. I had to "become" the CW operator in attendance. Once I learned a little Morse code, the club wanted me there for Field Day. I became the sideshow, showing new hams and interested onlookers a mode that dates back to the beginning of radio. Actually, the roots of CW are in the telegraph world, which predates radio. Running CW on Field Day is like having an on-site wireless museum there for guests to see.

***Back to that spectrum display...***

If sending CQ is a waste of time in a QRP outing... that limits the CW operator to "tail ending" existing QSOs. These days, a lot of those conversations are POTA activations. On a non-contest day, POTA stations make up most of what's going on at the CW end of the bands. I might go so far as to say that POTA (and SOTA) saved daytime CW.

SOTA, in particular, demands small, light radio equipment. The usual SOTA radio fits in a pocket. SOTA operators like simple wire antennas that spool up on wire winders that also fit in a pocket. No SOTA operator wants to drag a footlocker full of gear to the summit.

CW-only radios can be very small, and the batteries can be tiny. I have CW radios that only draw 50 mA of current when receiving. They are analog radios. Once the radio becomes an SDR, the receive power requirement increases by a factor of 4 to 8.

On transmit, CW-only radios with Class A outputs were 50% efficient at best. Most QRP CW radio designs these days use Class E (square wave) outputs and extensive output filtering. These are 80+ percent efficient on transmit. I have Class E output QRP radios that don't even heat sink the final output transistors. They don't have to.

While SOTA ops try to find the best, light gear... POTA ops vary. I know POTA operators who run 100 W radios off the tailgate of an SUV. Their motto is, "Life is too short for QRP".

For the last 9 months or so, I have been operating exclusively QRP. it is a different life. With 100 watts, if I could hear a station, chances are I could work it. With 5 watts, that's not the case. North American stations I can often work with QRP. International is a different story. I have worked Europe and the Far East (and even Micronesia) with QRP, but it takes luck. The fates of propagation have to be in your favor, and most of the time, they are not.

One symptom of this is sending CQ with QRP. You can send for an hour, and no one will answer. Even worse, you can send CQ... and hear someone else tuning up on you... and think, "Finally, someone hears me!".... and then you hear them sending CQ on your frequency. It's not that they are rude. They can't hear you. This is particularly common with people who run old boat anchor radios with bad receivers. They can't hear you.

Ultra-cheap QRP gear has the same problem. A Pixie kit ($10) has a 100 uV receiver in it. Not good.

Moral of the story: Sending CQ with QRP is usually not productive. And $1400 QRP radios with spectrum displays are nice, indeed. But those radios use digital processing ICs to do all of the work, and those ICs use a lot of power. Then, it's not just the radio that is bigger - it's the battery, too.

Even though an SDR QRP radio and its battery weigh more, your wallet will weigh less... so it's sort-of a wash.

Full disclosure here: I own a QRP, SDR radio. It cost me $170 new, with the battery. It does not have a spectrum display. And, I like the radio. But, my favorite radio is a 3 band analog rig that is the size of 2 decks of cards. It doesn't perform as well as the SDR radio does. Somehow, the analog rig finds its way into my "go box" more often than any other QRP radio that I own.

That includes the Pixie kit... that horrible thing.

I remember firing up my Pixie kit with the home shack antenna (a 43 ft. wire). Sent CQ, and within 5 minutes I had someone come back at me. It was a guy in Oklahoma (300 miles away) with another Pixie kit. He had just finished assembling it. And he was ecstatic. "Ten dollar radio, and it works!"

He got lucky.

POTA and SOTA may have saved daytime CW. Nighttime CW is a wonder all to itself. Once the sun falls, the CW end of 40 meters is an international parade. It's incredible. With a good antenna and 100 watts, you can get halfway around the world.

- ***Jim Eatman KG5WAW***

# SARA Club Officers for 2023-2024

Current officers for the Sachse Amateur Radio Association, per the election held at the September 2023 General Meeting.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| President | Andy Barnes | W5KZJ |
| Vice President | Mike Crow | W5MJC |
| Secretary | Kathy Wingo | KI5LEY |
| Treasurer | Linda Smyder | K5LCS |
| Public Information Officer | Jeff Feldman | KI5DDX |
| Director at Large | John Smyder | W5JWS |
| Newsletter Editor | Ev Wingo | KI5LEX |

# JOIN THE ARRL

As an ARRL Affiliated Club, SARA receives a commission for every **new** ARRL membership and **renewal** we submit to ARRL Headquarters and get to retain a portion of the dues for each regular membership submitted.

Clubs retain **$15 for each new membership** OR lapsed membership (of two years or more). A NEW MEMBER is defined as any individual who has never been a member of ARRL or any individual who has not retained a membership for two or more calendar years prior to the application submission.

Clubs retain **$5 for each renewal**. A RENEWING MEMBER can renew at anytime, even before their current membership term expires.

**You can download the ARRL Affiliated Club Membership form here.**

Once downloaded, complete the form and get it to the club Treasurer along with a check made out to 'Sachse Amateur Radio Association' and we will submit your ARRL membership application/renewal to ARRL Headquarters. (**NOTE**: ARRL Headquarters is working on getting an on-line version working so that you can go directly to them and the ARRL will send the club a check for any new or renewed memberships.)

# ARRL Resources for Ham Radio

The Sachse Amateur Radio Club is an ARRL-affiliated club. There are many learning resources available through the ARRL web site. If you are new to Ham Radio. Some topics are at the top of the page. Experienced Hams should scroll down to the Experienced Ham Resources section.

## New to Amateur Radio:

### Ham Radio Glossary

Stuck on ham radio terms and lingo? Get the meanings here.

### What is a Repeater?

Check out this detailed read on what a repeater is and how to use them here.

## Experienced Ham Resources:

### Technical Advice

Lots of good information here.

### Member Blog

Check out what other Hams are discussing here.

**Looking to learn more things involving amateur radio with which you can get involved?**

Discover the ARRL Learning Center

## NEWSLETTER ARTICLES

Working on a project that you think the club members would be interested in? Read a good HAM related article somewhere? Send articles to SARA Newsletter Editor: newslettereditor@sachseradio.org

## ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE

SARA vice-president Mike Crow, W5MJC heads up the SARA Activities Committee. Anyone who is willing to help or has ideas may contact Mike at: vicepresident@sachseradio.org

## SARA BRANDED GEAR

We now have two suppliers for SARA gear. Both of these companies have our logo on file.

HamThreads will do hats, shirts, jackets and vests. They can do single items. HamThreads is in Saginaw.
https://www.hamthreads.com

## SARA NAME BADGES

If you need a SARA name badge please go to:
https://namebadge.com/sachse

# MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

**Tony Fiorda WB8ZWI**

It all started when I found, like a lot of us, CB radio back in the mid 1970's. The ability to communicate without having to find a land line phone was enthralling. However, there was one person in my family who would not touch a radio. To talk to her, I found out that amateur radio had the ability to connect to the landlines through auto patch equipment/configurations. Both my father (WB8ZWH now sk) and I almost immediately got our Technician licenses, essentially for that. Jump to today and I am now an Amateur Extra!

I was very active on the repeaters in and around Cincinnati and did a bit of CW on the HF bands too. But when I got a job in Atlanta that had a lot of travelling around the country and to Europe, I didn't operate at all during the 26 years I was there. I followed my wife to Dallas, she works for AT&T, and after a few years I retired. I needed something to do all day besides organizing the garage, and while doing that I found my radio gear and discovered amateur radio again!

I've joined radio clubs around the Sachse area (SARA, PARK, RWK) and then became a VE for the ARRL, Laurel, and W5YI. In addition to testing, I enjoy communicating for events like the Dallas Marathon, the American Diabetes Association bike ride and the Blackland Triathlon to name a few. I'm active on local nets, enjoy C4FM/Wires-X communications around the world and I run a Hotspot to cross connect C4FM to DMR, P25, and NXDN. Finally, I've started to play with GMRS and have discovered the different nationwide networks that have been created over there.

73!

Tony WB8ZWI

# Pictures from the SARA Annual Christmas Party

**Held Saturday, December 16th**
**Napolis Italian Restaurant**
**Wylie, TX**

# Door Prize Winners

| | |
|---|---|
| **Rusty Cain** | **Handheld Radio** |
| **Joseph Ellis** | **$50 HRO Gift Certificate** |
| **Jeff Feldman** | **ARRL Antenna Books, set of 4** |
| **Mike Haliburton** | **Tool bag with heat shrink, bungee cords, and zip ties** |
| **Linda Smyder** | **Tool bag with heat shrink, bungee cords, and zip ties** |
| **Jim Szot** | **$25 HRO Gift Certificate** |
| **Brandon Thomas** | **$25 HRO Gift Certificate** |
| **Kathy Wingo** | **$25 HRO Gift Certificate** |

# Sachse Amateur Radio Association
# General Meeting Minutes
# December 16, 2023

**The Annual Christmas Party was held in lieu of the December 2023 General Membership Meeting. No club business was conducted, therefore no minutes were kept.**


## SARA Skywaves

Is published each month for the purpose of informing Sachse Amateur Radio Association members of current events and issues of interest to amateur radio operators. Articles and suggestions are always welcome. Articles that appear in this publication may be reproduced provided credit is given to ***SARA Skywaves*** and to the original source.
SARA is a Texas Non-Profit 501(c)3 corporation based in Sachse, TX.

**SARA Newsletter Editor**
**P.O. Box 1764**
**Wylie, TX 75048-1764**

# Sachse Amateur Radio Association
# Board Meeting Minutes
# December 28, 2023

Start time: 7:00 p.m.

Location: Google Meet

Facilitator: Andy Barnes W5KZJ, President

The invocation was offered by Andy Barnes W5KZJ, President.

President Andy Barnes W5KZJ thanked everyone for attending.

***Attendees:***

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Andy Barnes – W5KZJ | Mike Crow – W5MJC | Jeff Feldman – KI5DDX |
| Ev Wingo – KI5LEX | Kathy Wingo – KI5LEY | Amado Pereira—KJ5DGS** |

** - Non-voting club member

***New Business***:

Moving SARA forward – Ideas from the December 4th net:

- More portable operation activities
- GMRS repeater
- Tech question or subject for the weekly net

These were some of the ideas that came from the December 4th Net participants. Plan for more park activations (POTA). There are 100s of GMRS users on Channel 20. These could fill our requests for club growth. Perhaps adding a 5-10 minute conversation on the Net about a tech question or subject. Use the "how was your ham week" for the following week's topics.

**ACTION:** This will be posted to the January agenda for membership discussion.

Further discussion on proposed changes to the By-Laws:

**Article III Officers**

A through G, add shall be a voting member of the Board of Directors.

The Business Committee consists of President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer votes on spending monies. All members of the board vote on all other business.

**ACTION:** No action needed.

**Article II Membership**

All new licensees that test with Laurel be granted membership for the remainder of the current fiscal year at no charge.

This will give the club members an opportunity to mentor them and bring more members to the club.

**ACTION:** Place on January agenda for discussion.

**Article IV Meeting Procedures**

6.01 Meetings. Regular meetings shall be held each month at such a place, as officers shall order. The President may call special meetings. Written notices shall be sent twenty-five days before special meetings concerning the business to be transacted. Only such business as designated shall be transacted at special meetings.

What if the reason for the special meeting is more immediate? The Open Meetings Act requires a 72-hour notice for any meeting of a governing body. It is proposed to change to 72-hour notice that the meeting is needed.

No further business was discussed.

***Adjournment:***

**MOTION:** Ev Wingo KI5LEX made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:19 p.m. Mike Crow W5MSC seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted by:
Kathy Wingo KI5LEY
Secretary

# Weekly Information Net Control Station Script

This net control script is a ***SUGGESTED*** script for the NCS to use to conduct the weekly net. NCS should feel free modify this script as needed to encourage maximum participation by all net participants.

(NCS Reads the text in black. Instructions to NCS are in (red).)

(A list of potential questions to ask the net attendees can be found here.)

(Preamble)

Good evening all Radio Amateurs and welcome. This is (Your Call), my name is (Your Name), and I will be your Net Control Station for this session of Ham Radio in Sachse Weekly Information Net. This net meets every Monday night at 7:00 PM local time, on the W5SRA repeater, frequency 440.350, with an offset of +5, and using a PL tone of 110.9, for the purpose of discussing topics of interest to SARA members and others. (pause) This is a Directed Net. Please donot transmit unless directed to do so by Net Control. If the repeater should go down, everyone should switch to the Sachse emergency simplex frequency 146.400.

Also, if at any time, you have an emergency that is an imminent threat to life or property, break in by saying*"Priority", "Emergency", or "Break Break" followed by your call sign, and the net will recognize your station and will stand by.*

*(Pause)*
(A reminder—Net Control Should ID about every 10 minutes.)

(Check-Ins)
As we start check-ins this evening, we will break it down into a couple of categories.

1. Portable, mobile and short time check-ins.
2. General Check-ins

We will initially stand-by for portable, mobile and short time check-ins. Please, come now with your phonetic call sign, followed by your name.

(Recognize short time, portable and mobile check-ins individually.)
(Go through the list and allow each station to make any comments that they might have.)
(ASK for any additional check-ins.)

We will now standby for general check-ins. Please, check in now with your phonetic call sign, followed by your name.

(Go through the list and allow each station to make any comments that they might have. Then ask for more check-ins – this might need to be done 2 or 3 or more times – until there are no more check-ins.)
(Make sure you give your own call-sign regularly and allow others to ID appropriately as well.)
(ASK for any additional check-ins.)

(Club Announcements)

We will start off with club announcements from club officers. Any club officer on the net with an announcement, please give us your call sign.

(Aways make certain the weekly QSO eyeball breakfast is announced)

SARA meets for breakfast every Saturday morning at 7:30AM at Ballard Street Cafe, 112 N. Ballard St. in downtown Wylie. People begin showing up around 7 with most showing up by 7:30AM.

(General Announcements)

At this time, we will take stations with announcements of interest to the amateur radio community in general.

*(When Ham Operators check-in initially, they may tell you if they have an announcement for later in the Net. Make note of those who have announcements and recognize them first.)*

(TECH CORNER and SWAP NET)

Is there anyone who would like to ask a technical question, or share information on something they would like to buy or sell?Remember no haggling over price. Please come now with your call sign.

(Wrap-Up)

This is (your name and call). We wish to thank all who participated in the net this evening. This net will meet again next Monday night at 7:00 PM local time on the W5SRA Repeater. Sachse Amateur Radio Association meets the second Thursday at 7:30 PM at North Point Church of Christ, 7030 Hwy 78, Sachse , TX. The Sachse Amateur Radio Association Board of Directors meets the fourth Thursday at 7:00 PM on Google Meet. A link for this meeting is in the club calendar.

(Late Check-Ins)

Before we end this Net, I would like to take late check-ins. If there are any late check-ins, please give your call sign and name slowly and clearly.

*(Write down and read back each call sign).*

(Close the net)

This concludes the "Ham Radio in Sachse '' Weekly Information Net. If you would like more information about the Sachse Amateur Radio Association, please visit our web site at www.sachseradio.org. This is *(name and call sign)* and we now return the W5SRA repeater to its normal use. Hope to hear from you next week.